

THE EYE SHIELD



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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue 47 of The Eye Shield. It seems hard to believe that twenty years ago this month, I (and many others of you, I'm sure) was settling down excitedly in front of the TV every Monday afternoon to watch the very first series of Knightmare. Let's take a moment to thank our lucky stars for that glorious occasion, and also to thank Nicholas for creating and maintaining this fabulous website that has brought us all together. Have you done that? Good, then we'll get on.

You know, putting an issue of TES together is no mean feat, so I'm always very grateful to have a few helpers to assist me with this venture. Within this very issue, you'll find some of the fruits of their labours. Thanks for these, guys - they really do help TES to maintain its somewhat tentative fanzine status. Liam Callaghan delves into the world of literary adaptations in *Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With*, Gary Day takes us into the third and final level of *The Adventurer's Adventure*, Rosey Collins presents another round of *The Big Issue*, and Robin Barlow presents an improview with advisor Alan "Mystara" Boyd, who was the captain of the sixth team of series 8, which also featured (just in case you didn't know) Dunstan the dungeoneer.

What's the difference between an improview and an interview, I hear you ask. Well, an improview is an improvised interview, and Robin was kind enough to conduct one with Alan specifically for The Eye Shield. This really is a fantastic contribution, Robin - thanks again, both to you and Alan, for thinking of my humble fanzine. Readers, if you want to know more about what it was like to be contestant on Knightmare, and to learn the whole truth behind the infamous Short Cut, then look no further!

As if all that wasn't enough, you also have my own personal efforts to look forward to as usual, including another trip to Leeds Castle in Kent, which is a great place to visit for fans of series 4, and a rundown of my top ten personal favourite ad-libs from the programme. I bet you can't wait to get started, so don't let me keep you!

Sheffield's Liam Callaghan discusses the issue of Barry's so-called shortcut.

On the subject of Barry, did you notice that he survived getting sliced in the Corridor of Blades? Considering that other dungeoneers have perished from much smaller nicks in that chamber, this struck me as odd - and it would never have happened in the

earlier series!

I couldn't agree with you more, Liam, but they couldn't let Barry die at this point, what with the troll on the loose and the end of the series about ten minutes away. This was slightly unfair, perhaps, as he did go on to win. Giles, too, was let off somewhat, but that didn't really matter, as he had no time to win anyway. The one that really gets me, though, is Dunstan – he's let off as well, and that really is annoying! I'll tell you what it is – it's the bit where the blades on the right are suddenly further down the wall than they have been; that confuses the teams, and it's necessitated a few let-offs, mark my words.

Over the summer, those of us *Raven* fans who are lucky enough to have access to the CBBC Channel were gripped by *Raven: The Secret Temple*, the follow-up series to *Raven: The Island*. Here is what Ross Thompson had to say about the show.

I think *The Secret Temple* is really good. It's better than *The Island* because the challenges are more original, and also people that are lost don't lose jewels that they are carrying. The bits with Nevar and the demons are a bit pointless because nothing happens, but it's to make the show more scary, I think.

Thanks for that, Ross. I think The Secret Temple is a marked improvement on The Island, but I still think the original is by far the best. One thing I thought was better in particular was that Raven and his female co-host interacted quite a lot with the warriors, which didn't happen in The Island. I wonder what they'll come up with next summer...

The following e-mail is just the kind of thing I'm always after to put in this section, so hearty thanks go out to Rosey Collins of Harpenden for the following:

Dear Eye Shield,

I'm e-mailing you today because I want to debate an issue that came up many, many years ago when Paul McIntosh argued that Motley was "slightly better" than Folly. I disagree entirely. I don't deny that Motley was a very good character - indeed, his appeal meant that he managed to make it from series 3 right through to the final series (except for series 7, when Paul Valentine was given the role of Fidjit instead, but the least said about that, the better).

But let us consider why this is. I suggest this: Motley made the transition from the old days to the later series of *Knightmare*, because he didn't fit the original format like the other characters did (I haven't forgotten that Hordriss made the same feat - but let us not forget that he went through a lot of changes, along with the show itself). The original format was all classic medieval figures such as wizards, crones, knights, monks, maidens and - oh yes - jesters. And yet what was a jester doing in the later series, after the classic icons of medieval myth had gone? To me, this is simple. He wasn't *really* playing a jester - he was just a funny guy who happened to be wearing a jester's outfit.

Let's look at Alec Westwood's performance as Folly. He told jokes, posed riddles and used his body a lot - and I don't just mean after he caught Gretel that time he was chasing her. He did a lot of dance and mime, his movements were always theatrical - and a few times he seemed to turn himself into a statue when he was finished with the dungeoneer rather than exiting the scene like most. Motley never did any of this. I say again: funny guy in a jester's outfit, but one that did not behave like a jester.

Therefore, I feel that Paul's verdict is unjust; I seem to remember that the comment came in Folly's *Remember Him*, next to his score for Oscar Standard. So Valentine's acting was better? I don't think so. Westwood was acting like a jester; Valentine was acting, probably, very much like himself.

So, will this spark off a fascinating debate? I hope so. Why don't you write in and tell me who your favourite jester (or monk, maid, guard etc, for that matter) is, and why. As I said in The Big Issue many years ago, Motley is my favourite character of the two, but I think he's bound to have had more of a lasting effect on Nightmare fans, seeing as he stuck around for so much longer than Folly. But take a look at Folly's appearances and you'll see what Rosey means – he acts like a court jester (or a professional fool, to be more precise) to a far, far greater extent than Motley does, so if you're comparing which of the two characters was the better jester, I'd say that Folly would be the clear winner. What do you think, readers?

And now, here are the answers to the latest Nightmare QI quiz, along with the scores of all you readers who were brave enough to enter the competition:

1. What was the name of Treguard's second assistant?

Correct answer: Daughter of the Setting Moon, whose Eyes are like Daggers in the Hearts of Men who Guard/Ride the Great Caravan of the Sultan.

Cliché answer: Majida.

Explanation: As we know from the genie's very first appearance, her real name is a ridiculously long and "comical" affair, whereas Majida is apparently a shortened version.

2. How many dungeoneers met Lord Fear in person (not including just his hand, or appearances on the television screen in the antechamber) during their quests?

Correct answer: 5.

Cliché answer: 4.

Explanation: The lucky few include Alan, Ben II, Julie II, Rebecca and Dunstan. The trap here was not to count Alan, as there has been some confusion in the past over the identity of the mysterious beggar, who at first appeared to be Hordriss, responsible for giving Alan the Medusa Eye. It was Lord Fear – get over it!

3. Which is the odd elf out? VELDA, PICKLE, ELITA.

Correct answer: Elita, simply because she was a cavern elf, while the other two were both wood elves.

Cliché answer: Anything to do with the number of series any of them appeared in, the fact that Pickle was Treguard's assistant and the other two

weren't, or the spellings of their names.

4. **Who was the first character to say the word "Dunshelm" on the programme?**

Correct answer: Velda.

Cliché answer: Treguard.

Explanation: Dunshelm, the original name of Nightmare Castle, is a word that was mentioned very, very rarely on the programme itself, but was used with gay abandon by Dave Morris in the Nightmare books. Despite the fact that Treguard often refers to himself in the early books as "Treguard of Dunshelm", he never actually calls himself by this name on the programme. Indeed, one could argue that the name Dunshelm is not canonical with the programme itself, were it not for the fact that Velda very clearly calls the Dungeon Master "Treguard of Dunshelm" during Scott's quest in series 3, which is a nice bit of continuity between the programme and the book published that year, *The Labyrinths of Fear*, in which Treguard of Dunshelm and the Lady Velda first meet. Later, Treguard himself once uses the term Dunshelm to refer to Nightmare Castle, early in series 6.

5. **On how many television channels in the UK has Nightmare been shown?**

Correct answer: 4.

Cliché answer: 3.

Explanation: Okay, this is an absolute stinker of a question, and the answer should be more than enough to make anyone go, "Oh, come on!". Nightmare has, in fact, been shown on four TV channels in the UK: ITV1 (then called simply ITV), from 1987 to 1994; the Sci-Fi Channel, from 1995 to 1998; Challenge, from 2002 to 2007; and Challenge +1, from 2004 to 2007. I know, Challenge +1 is exactly the same as Challenge, but technically it is a different channel, and it is certainly counted as such on any piece of literature that tells you you've got two hundred fantastic cable channels in your TV package! What it doesn't tell you is that about half of these are just +1 channels, so you've really only got one hundred. What a rip-off, eh? Still, it's a lot more than the four I grew up with...

6. **Who was the first dungeoneer to reach the wellway chamber at the end of level two?**

Correct answer: Simon I.

Cliché answer: Richard I.

Explanation: Richard was the first dungeoneer to reach level three, but Simon had already visited the wellway room earlier in series 1, where he had been killed by a sleepy but irate Gibbet. Despite this fact, neither quest has been widely regarded as the best performance in series 1. This honour is generally given to Danny, who faced and conquered more challenges overall than either Richard or Simon, despite the fact that, unlike them, he did not reach the wellway room.

7. **Greystagg's full title was "Queen of the..." what?**

Correct answer: Grey Sisters.

Cliché answer: Witches.

Explanation: Although she undoubtedly was a witch, and even referred to herself as such on occasion, Greystagg never admitted to being "the Witch Queen" or "Queen of the Witches", as other characters dubbed her. The title she used was "Queen of the Grey Sisters", which was the chosen name of the

witches of Witch Haven.

8. Motley was absent from how many episodes during his extended break?

Correct answer: 22.

Cliché answer: 15.

Explanation: It wasn't just series 7 from which Motley was absent – it was the entire second half of series 6 as well! Motley made no appearances from episode 608 to episode 801, which is a total of 22 episodes (7 from series 6 and 15 from series 7).

9. In terms of the number of episodes from the start of the first series in which they were due to appear, which Nightmare character took the greatest amount of time to make their first appearance on the programme?

Correct answer: Mogdred.

Cliché answer: No particular cliché – you were either right or wrong!

Explanation: As we are all well aware by now, Mogdred was supposed to and could have appeared in series 1. However, his first appearance did not actually take place until the third episode of series 2, which means that fully ten episodes had passed since he could have, in theory, made his first appearance. Even someone like Aesandre, who took until the eighth episode of series 5 to grace us with her presence, cannot rival Mogdred in this respect. By the way, we are not counting Owen here, seeing as he (or his drawing, at least) had already appeared in series 2, even though he took fifteen episodes to turn up in series 3. (Addendum: Actually, Dooreen is technically the correct answer to this question, as she took a full thirteen episodes to appear in series 4. However, upon discovering this, I decided to continue to allow Mogdred as the correct answer too, seeing as he did take well over a year to appear, thanks to the gap between series 1 and 2.)

10. During how many quests in series 7 do we get to see the firebomb room?

Correct answer: 4.

Cliché answer: 3.

Explanation: The four quests are those of Simon, Ben, Julie and Barry. Simon, Ben and Barry all had to complete the challenge, whereas Julie flew up through the room on her way back to the antechamber, after retrieving the Sword of Freedom and casting the RETURN spell.

Rank	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
1	Drassil	4	4	2	4	3	4	2	1	4	4	32
2	Liam C	2	10	4	3	1	4	2	2	2	1	11
=3	HStorm	3	1	1	2	10	2	3	2	3	1	8
=3	Ross T	4	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	8
5	Pooka	2	10	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	6
6	Joe G-J	2	3	1	2	10	4	1	1	1	0	5

Well done, Drassil – you now have a truly spectacular hat trick of wins, and are a worthy Nightmare QI champion indeed! Nightmare QI takes a short break now, but it will return in issue 48, with a fresh batch of questions from the Godfather of QI himself, Martin "HStorm" Odoni. Y'all come back now, won't you?

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 3. Level 1.

ROLL THE BONES

Upon first entering the Dungeon in series 3, all twelve dungeoneers arrived in a green room with no exits. The only thing in the room was a green table, with raised sides on all but the edge closest to the dungeoneer, containing a large six-sided die. With prompting from Treguard, the advisors would direct the dungeoneer to pick up the die and roll it, thus causing a very large computer-generated die to fly into the room (with appropriate sound effects) and open up to reveal three doors, one of which the dungeoneer would then use to progress further into their quest.

Like the Wheel of Fate in the previous series, this was a very simple starter that demanded no luck, skill or thought, but was simply a chance for the production team to show off some of their impressive, groundbreaking graphics. It did, however, serve as a calm, hazard-free introduction to the quest, which went some way towards putting the teams at their ease.

For the watchers at home, this was an eye-catching, impressive piece of computer wizardry, epitomic of what made Knightmare such an enthralling, surprising programme. Although the sequence was enjoyable to watch for the first few quests, however, by the time Chris II got round to rolling the die in episode fifteen of the series, everyone knew what was coming, and took it in its stride.

After the first few teams had decided to take their dungeoneers out through the right-hand exit, quest object symbols started to be added over the left-hand or middle door in order to provide a bit of variety. However, this did not add any threat or challenge to the room at all, for the quest would still ultimately be awarded by the wall monster (Golgarach or Brangwen) even if the dungeoneer had not exited under the symbol.

And that really is all there was to this room. Some advisors had trouble accepting how easy the challenge was, but it was nice little starter, and a memorable part of the programme.

Difficulty: 1 Anyone can roll a die!

Killer Instinct: 0 That would have been embarrassing!

Gore Factor: 0 It would have been boring as well!

Fairness: 10 An interesting and memorable start to the quest.

ADVENTURE TIME

In this never-ending quest season, the Dungeon holds an impressive lead of 14 defeats to 5 wins. Let's see what Josh and his team can do to alter the scoreline.

Josh's quest begins in a small blue cave, where Motley is sitting on a wooden table. The advisors direct the dungeoneer towards the jester.

"Oh, hello," Motley says dolefully. "What do you want?"

"I'm a dungeoneer," Josh replies. "Do you have any information for me?"

"You're a dungeoneer, are you?" Motley scowls. "Wow, it's a good thing you told me. It's not like I have any idea what a dungeoneer looks like, after all..."

"Motley, cease this sarcastic prattle and get on with it!" Treguard orders.

"Very well, Master," Motley says sulkily. "Okay, Helmet Head, you want some information, do you? Well, here's some. I've lost my Joker playing card, which is the source of my somewhat limited magic power. I've looked all over the Dungeon for it, but I can't find it anywhere! If you were to recover it for me, I'd do all I can to help you with your quest. What do you say, eh?"

The advisors discuss this for a few seconds, but the choice to make is an obvious one.

"Yes, I'll help you," Josh tells Motley. "How do I call you once I've found the card?"

"You play it, of course," Motley replies impatiently, as if he is talking to an imbecile. "Chuck it on the floor in front of you, and I'll appear. Think you can manage that, Tin Bonce?"

"Sure," Josh replies silkily.

"Right, get on your way, then," Motley says shortly. "I want to get back to my sulking."

The advisors direct Josh out of the room. He emerges into a red clue room, where there is a table containing a firestone, a bar of gold and an elaborately carved ivory comb. Josh is directed up to the table.

"As usual, team, there's plenty here to catch the eye," Treguard

remarks. "And, as usual, there's a price to pay for all."
The front wall reforms itself into the imposing face of Brangwen.

"Hold your hand, little dungeoneer!" the wall monster commands. "Only with the truth may you earn your quest. I have three mysteries, and here is my first. Pink at birth, then red in prime; then turns green with passing time. What is it?"

The advisors chatter for a while, and manage to come up with the answer.

"Copper," says Josh.

"Truth accepted," says Brangwen. "Here is my second. I can be an animal or a human; perhaps a man, or even a woman. I have no heart, so cannot be killed. Tickle my toes and I'll stay quite still. What am I?"

The advisors struggle to come up with an answer to this most bizarre and obscure of riddles.

"Come on, team, this *stony* silence won't please the wall monster," Treguard says significantly.

"Rock," Josh is told to reply at last.

"Falsehood," sneers Brangwen. "Statue was the truth I sought. Here is my third. In the night I come out to play, but you'll sometimes see me during the day. In my gaze are shadows grown, though the light I cast is not my own. What am I?"

"The Moon," Josh replies with certainty.

"Truth accepted," Brangwen says emotionlessly. "Two is the score; you may learn more. All that glitters is not always good company. Remember, the first step is writing, but it is not the next step. The quest is for the Cup, yet you may not drink from it."

With that, the wall monster disappears. The advisors tell Josh to take the firestone and the comb before directing him out of the room. He emerges into a lady's bedchamber, where Queen Kalina is sitting at a dressing table, looking very annoyed and flustered indeed.

"How dare you?" Kalina declares, spotting Josh in her mirror and rising to her feet in indignation. "This is my private chamber; it is not a place for dungeoneers, especially not if they are impressionable young men! Give your name, intruder!"

"I'm Josh," he replies.

"I hope you don't make a habit of bursting into ladies' private chambers, Josh, particularly when their hair is in such a terrible state!"

"Er, no, not really. Look, would you like this comb to straighten out your hair?"

Queen Kalina studies the proffered instrument closely, and smiles to herself.

"Why, what a pretty little thing," she purrs. "The comb, I mean; not you. Very well then, Josh. For this divine trinket, I shall forget this affront and allow you to pass... this time!"

Josh hands over the comb, and Kalina returns to her dressing table to comb her hair. The advisors begin to direct Josh out.

"By the way, Josh," Queen Kalina says casually, continuing to comb her hair as she speaks. "The password for this level is *intruder* - very appropriate for you, I'm sure you'll agree."

Josh leaves the private chamber of Queen Kalina, and emerges into a small pink room with a grey metal wall just by the only door.

"Ah, well, I suppose this was only to be expected," Treguard chuckles. "Stand your ground for now, Josh, unless you want to be squashed flat!" The wall grates forward and forms the angry face of a blocker.

"Password!" the creature demands.

"Intruder," Josh replies at once.

The blocker shoots off, leaving the exit clear. Josh is directed out, into a small wooden chamber with a large metal door on the front wall. As the advisors watch, the door clatters upwards to reveal the massive reptilian back of a green dragon beyond.

"Yes, here I am again," Smirkenorff's voice wafts into the room. "Seems all I'm good for nowadays is courier services. Well, Josh, you'd better climb aboard if you want to reach level two - I'm not going to hang around here all day."

Josh is directed onto Smirkenorff's back; the dragon turns his scaly head around to face the dungeoneer.

"Loath as I am to mention payment, I'll need something to fuel me for the flight," Smirkenorff says languorously. "Do you have anything for me?"

Josh holds out the firestone in his right hand.

"Hmm, a firestone," Smirkenorff rumbles. "They do tend to disagree with my stomach nowadays, but I suppose it's better than nothing. Very well; hold quite still."

Smirkenorff lunges forward and snaps up the firestone, missing Josh's hand by a fraction of an inch. As Smirkenorff crunches up his snack, Josh climbs into the saddle and prepares for takeoff.

"Right then," Smirkenorff announces when his mouth is empty. "You're off to level two, you lucky devil. Here we go!"

Smirkenorff flaps his leathery wings and takes to the sky. He flies over mountains, seas and rivers until he reaches the courtyard of a ruined castle, where he comes in to land smoothly.

"Here we are, then," the dragon announces. "All change, please."

"Thanks for the ride," Josh says to him.

"Oh, don't worry about it," Smirkenorff yawns disinterestedly. "It's good for me to stretch my wings. Oh, yes, you might want to remember, Josh, that the second step is reading."

Josh is directed off Smirkenorff's back, across the courtyard, through the main door of the castle, and into level two.

Will Josh and his allies prove themselves equal to the Dungeon's challenges? Will Motley get his powers back? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.

KIDS' TV SHOWS I GREW UP WITH

By Liam Callaghan

LITERARY ADAPTATIONS

Having covered the basic action and comic cartoons in the previous two sections, I am now turning my attention to literary adaptations that found their way onto children's television. For the sake of complete clarity, I'd better say right now that my use of the term "literary" is something of a catchall, as I am defining the expression "literary adaptation" as follows: if it appeared in print in *any form, before* it appeared on screen, then it counts here. And of course there'll be some in here that you might have expected to come across in previous articles. The one obvious omission from this section is Disney, which for various reasons (not the least of which being space), I will be covering in more detail next time in my mainstays section.

Thomas the Tank Engine

This was one of my absolute favourites when I was a child, and to be honest, I still remember it quite fondly now. Based on the books by the Reverend Wilbur Audrey, these tales of railway life on the fictional Island of Sodor are a delight. The adventures of the various trains captivated me as a child, and have doubtless contributed to many a little boy's dream of being an engine driver when they grow up. So far as I remember, the show stuck pretty much exactly to the original books. The earlier ones certainly did, although I think the later series may have ventured further afield - I can't say for sure, as I didn't see that many of the later ones.

Those later series were narrated by Michael Angelis, but the earlier stories were recounted by his fellow Scouser Ringo Starr, perhaps the only instance of a Beatle being better known for something outside the music world - of course, this doesn't apply to me now, as I am very much a Beatles fan, but certainly when I was little, Ringo's name meant more to me as being the narrator of my favourite kiddies' show than as the drummer in a 1960s band that didn't exist anymore.

The series was made using bog-standard model trains with interchangeable faces - nothing remarkable about this. Nor was there anything especially remarkable about the theme music; there's nothing to immediately endear it to someone if they don't know its associations. And yet somehow, when the whole thing came together, the end result was a

little slice of magic.

Now, as I've already stated, I can't speak for the later series, which I think may have even created new characters, but I certainly remember the earlier series, which did stick to the stories pretty much as written. And that was a fair while ago now; so considering that the stories had already passed the test of time when I first began to enjoy them, it's a safe bet that this animation will have done the same.

The Wombles

Based on the books by Elizabeth Beresford, which she thought up after a walk with her children across Wimbledon Common during which one of them mispronounced the name, the Wombles have been described as the "furriest, and possibly tidiest act, ever to enter the charts" - back in the mid 1970s, thanks to composer Mike Batt, they had no less than three top five singles, with another three making the top twenty!

However, their music career aside, the Wombles were memorable for two main reasons. Firstly, their recycling policy is admirable, and we could all learn a lesson or two from them when it comes to making good use of the things that the everyday folk leave behind. Secondly, of course, the characters' names, which were taken from anything and everything in Great Uncle Bulgaria's atlas of the world - islands (Tobermory), cities (Wellington), rivers (Orinoco) and many other geographical features besides, I'm sure.

To cap it all, the whole thing was narrated, in a very avuncular manner, by Bernard Cribbins. This is another one of those series in which I don't much remember individual episodes, and I certainly don't remember what the actual stories in the books were - so I can't say how well the storylines stuck to the originals, if at all, but as we British generally do this sort of thing reasonably well, I'd hazard a guess that any changes made were in the spirit of the original. Certainly it didn't bother me at the time, and I did generally pick up on this sort of thing very quickly, so it probably did stick closely to the original. Another one that I would be curious to see through adult eyes.

Paddington Bear

A tale of two Michaels, so to speak, as the series, made in the 1970s (by the same people that did The Wombles) and narrated by Sir Michael Horder, was based on the books from the 1950s by Michael Bond, about

the bear with a taste for marmalade who was found on Paddington Station by the Brown family, who decided to take him home and name him after the station.

For the record, there was also an American version made of this character in the early 1990s - I remember watching it once or twice, but I think that it must have sunk without a trace (somewhat fortunately, as I recall it didn't have much in common with the original storylines). But this, the original English version, was one of the most striking animations ever made, because Paddington himself was basically a live-action animated Teddy Bear, while all the other characters, and the backdrops, were 2D cut-out animation; objects varied in style as they changed hands between Paddington and the rest.

As I recall, from the books and the cartoon, the series didn't quite stick exactly to the books, although the stories were certainly recognisable. The changes were made, so far as I can remember, in the spirit of the books, and mainly just to update it and make it a little more relevant to the period in which it was made. In any event, it was all good harmless fun and, like *Thomas the Tank Engine*, the books had already become children's classics long before I was born, so it's likely that this series, too, will have aged well.

Bananaman

A bit of a rogue entry, this, but the character of Bananaman first appeared in a comic strip, and was adapted for television in the early 1980s. Voiced by Graeme Garden, Bill Oddie and Tim Brooke-Taylor (collectively known as *The Goodies*), along with Jill Shilling providing the female voices, it told the tale of Eric, just a normal everyday schoolboy - until, of course, he eats a banana, when an amazing transformation occurs... Eric is Bananaman! This has to be the funniest superhero gimmick ever devised - become a superhero just by eating a banana!

Of course, looking back at this show now, it's the amazing variety of baddies that made it memorable; ranging from the Weatherman and Auntie to the main villain, General Blight, and the hero's arch-rival, Appleman, who I presume was another schoolboy who became this character by eating an apple - but, not having seen this show in years, I can't verify this.

Still, when all is said and done, I think it's safe to say that Bananaman was

a superb send-up of the superhero genre, and I'm reasonably sure it would still be appreciated today - not least because of the wonderful voices! Plus, the idea that eating a banana could turn you into a superhero might go a long way towards promoting healthy eating! All in all, then, another childhood classic.

Mr Men/Little Miss

Written by Roger Hargreaves, these books are arguably the most perfect reading matter for toddlers - with characters stereotyping just about every mental and emotional state you could imagine (with a few obvious exceptions that would be unsuitable for the target audience - even if such stories had been written, I can't really imagine any parents reading Mr Psychotic or Little Miss Horny to their children).

Still, the Mr Men, including Mr Happy, Mr Uppity, Mr Messy, and their female counterparts the Little Misses, whose ranks included Little Miss Bossy, Little Miss Scatterbrain and Little Miss Naughty, joined the literary canon of classic children's books a long time ago and, like so many of the greats, kept it simple. After all, young minds can only assimilate so much at once.

As for the cartoon, as far as I recall, it was a straight telling of the stories, with the Mr Men narrated by Arthur Lowe (best known, of course, as Captain Mainwaring from Dad's Army) while the Little Misses were narrated by Pauline Collins. I don't remember that much about the actual stories themselves, but as they were already old when I first saw them (Arthur Lowe died in the same year I was born), I think there's a very good chance that they've aged just fine.

Mr Benn

Dating back to the early 1970s, this cult classic about a city gent who enjoys dressing up in all sorts of different outfits first appeared in a 1967 children's book; and although the character is infinitely more famous for the television series, he did start out life in print, and so counts as an adaptation. Every one of the dozen or so episodes had the same format, whereby Mr Benn would go to the fancy dress shop, the shopkeeper would appear as if by magic (literally just appearing onscreen!), a costume would be selected, taken to the fitting room and tried on, and, wearing it, Mr Benn would then open the other door, that led to a strange new world - always, fortunately for him, a world appropriate to the costume he had chosen.

I can but wonder what would have happened if one day the new world he had entered had not fitted in with his choice of outfit! Again, I haven't seen this show in a number of years, and what I do remember of it now seems a little dated by modern standards, but it was all innocent, harmless fun, and probably still enjoyable if, like me, you don't mind your animation being a little primitive.

Dogtanian & the Three Muskehounds/Around the World with Willy Fog

I'm putting these two together for obvious reasons. They're both retellings, for the young audience, of classic 19th century French novels, by Alexandre Dumas and Jules Verne respectively. Allowing for concessions to their being aimed at children, they both do a pretty good job of sticking to the stories - something you'd never get nowadays. Both of them had a cast consisting entirely of animals of all shapes and sizes, and both including a diminutive rodent character who wasn't based on anybody in the original story, but was created especially for the young audience (Pip and Tico respectively).

They both had memorable theme tunes, which made very catchy sing-along material; the Willy Fog theme tune in particular fitted the show like a glove, as it was dripping with that English eccentricity that characterised the original Phileas Fogg in the book. Plus, of course, both had less successful sequels a few years later. If pressed for a favourite, I would say Willy Fog, but that's only because I did once manage to see the whole series in one run.

This wouldn't be a problem nowadays, but back then, when I was a nipper, whenever we went on holiday, I'd invariably miss one or two episodes, and rejoin the series having lost track of the storyline somewhat. It would be interesting to look at these shows again through more experienced eyes - also, having read both of the books (and others by the same authors) since then, I would be in a much better position to judge them. But for now, I'm sticking by what I've said - a pair of classics, without a shadow of a doubt.

The Animals of Farthing Wood

After the success of Willy Fog and Dogtanian in the 1980s, this was the 90s equivalent. Based on the books by Colin Dann, this show spanned three series, the first chronicling the animals' escape from their original home in Farthing Wood and subsequent journey to White Deer Park, while

the second and third series dealt with the problems that befell them once they had arrived there, from harsh winters, to the native blue foxes, to a marauding band of rats.

It's the first series that I remember best, partly because it was the only one I saw all the way through; my memories are a little vague when it comes to the second, and completely fragmented on the third. But, as I understand it, the first series was the best anyway. I certainly agree with that - I do remember at the time that the later series didn't quite have the same oomph. While I did get the BBC tie-in book at the time, I've never read any of the original books, although I think I'd like to - I can see that when I eventually have children of my own, I will have enough to keep them in bedtime stories for a very long time!

As for these books, I've heard that the first series stuck well to the first book, but the second and third series did deviate to varying degrees from the books - mainly because, I am informed, they were trying to squeeze in six books' worth of story into two series (in much the same way that the Willy Fog sequel incorporated both *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*). Still, regardless of accuracy, the series made for enjoyable viewing, and if it ever gets repeated, I'd be very interested to take a look and see how it's aged - probably quite well, I should think. I certainly hope so.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

There have been various versions of this classic tale by C. S. Lewis, including a live-action series in the 1980s and a recent blockbuster film, but the specific version I'm detailing here is the feature-length animation from 1979. Obviously, this was a children's book to begin with, so I read the original text of this one at a much younger age, and was consequently able much sooner to see how well this stuck to the book. And stick to the book it did.

There are actually some large chunks of dialogue that come right out of the text. Nothing wrong with that, I might add - it adds considerable authenticity. What adds even more authenticity is the original English cast. Watch out - this one has two different sets of voices (probably more, if it was redubbed into other languages), and the American voices are just plain *wrong*. For one thing, it's an English story, and for another, they just don't have the same class - and the less said about American child actors, the better. But with an English cast including Arthur Lowe,

Leslie Phillips, Sheila Hancock and Leo McKern, this is one piece of animated magic. Well worth checking out - and the Region 2 DVD does have the English cast. I love it!

Watership Down

Another single feature-length piece of animation, based on Richard Adams' classic tale about a group of rabbits looking for a new life. I understand there has been a more recent animated series based on this, but I haven't seen it, so can't comment. In all honesty, I can't say I have any overwhelming desire to see the series, considering that this feature from 1978 is so brilliant.

Sticking very closely to the book again, it brings to life the characters of Fiver, Hazel, Bigwig, General Woundwort and the rest of them excellently, in particular doing a great job of making it easy to tell most of the characters apart. The artwork is delightful, and backed up to perfection by another wonderful voice cast, including Richard Briers as Fiver, Simon Cadell as Blackberry, Zero Mostel as Keehar the seagull, and John Hurt as Hazel, not forgetting Michael Hordern as the narrator (and the voice of the rabbits' god, Frith).

And of course, Art Garfunkel singing "Bright Eyes" in the middle - a stunning song, made all the more so by the sequence in which it appears. This was a well-deserved hit, as was the entire film, which was a tale of characters, with some sequences that I know a number of people found somewhat disturbing when growing up. What that actually means is, this piece actually treats the audience with a bit of respect for their intelligence, and doesn't just spoon-feed a comical cartoon with a patronising "moral of the story" at the end.

Not that there's no moral element - there is, as it's always there implicitly in anything with "goodies" and "baddies". But it's not rammed down our throats; it's just one aspect of the feature, making it that much better, and another one that I'm proud to own on DVD.

To sum up, then, a mixed bunch, but that's because the stories are such a mixed bag. As usual, I've only scratched the surface of this most fascinating of topics, and there are plenty more series I could cover - both animated and live-action adaptations of children's stories. It's a tradition that, for children at least, goes back as far as Disney in the 1930s (earlier for grown-ups), and is still very much alive today, with the

big screen adaptations of the Harry Potter books (which I haven't read, but I've seen the first three films, and generally enjoyed them).

Of course, the area of adaptations in general is somewhat different to other shows because there are two criteria by which they are judged - are they good in their own right, and do they do justice to the book? If a show does well in one of these areas, it will do well in the other, almost inevitably. So ultimately, with any adaptation, what it boils down to is not *have any changes been made?*, because some detail or other will always be changed, either to suit the medium or the target audience - the real question is *do the changes keep to the spirit of the original?*, which, as a rule of thumb, is a much better way of comparing the two.

Regardless of that, in general, as a way of encouraging children to read, these literary adaptations are arguably one of the most essential aspects of kids' TV, and, if done well, the most rewarding to watch. Long may they continue!

Liam, you've taken us on another roller-coaster of a ride through some more treasured childhood memories, and I thank you heartily once again. This time, the coveted award for my favourite has to go to Dogtanian and the Three Muskehounds. It was a toss-up between this and The Animals of Farthing Wood, but I think Dogtanian has stood the test of time better, and it is certainly much less upsetting! As for Watership Down, I still have nightmares about that one... regularly! Next time, Liam turns his attention to the mainstays of children's TV. I can't wait!

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Insulting Quotes

Everyone remembers (though not necessarily with fondness) Folly and Cedric's battle of insults in series 1, but there were plenty of other characters that had something insulting to say to or about someone else. Who is insulting whom in the following quotes?

- 1.) "Some silly little Dungeon maid; all curls and no muscles!"
- 2.) "Here, push off, daddy-longlegs!"
- 3.) "Well, well, well. If it isn't old Boil Bonce, the boozing knight!"
- 4.) "Clear off, ya chinless twit, else I'll knock some sense back into ya!"
- 5.) "What's it doing wandering around level two in the company of a hairy barbarian?"
- 6.) "Have I ever told you how disgustingly ugly you are? Well, you are."
- 7.) "Oi you, you one-eyed effigy of ugliness!"
- 8.) "Listen to me, you pompous old practitioner, and listen good!"
- 9.) "He was always leaving things lying around; silly old fool."
- 10.) "You stuck-up... cow-person! Maybe better she cover the other side of her face as well."
- 11.) "Shut up, pea-brain!"
- 12.) "Oh, how awful of me, and how stupid you are, _____!"
- 13.) "Drunken, thieving, incompetent dolt!"
- 14.) "It's not beauty she needs; it's a brain!"

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 3

Quest: The Sword.

Dungeoneer: Julie Stretton.

Advisors: Amanda, Marie and Angela.

Home town: Knighton, Leicestershire.

Team score: $6\frac{1}{2}$ out of 10.

A very competent quest from series 3, this one, which (like Martin's and Leo's) failed for the want of one correct answer.

Level One: After rolling the die, Julie meets Mellisandre at Khar's pit. The maid helps Julie to escape from the giant snake, before sending her safely across the long pink tongue that leads into the Serpent's Mouth. In the clue room, Julie scores a very shaky two out of three with Brangwen. From the clue table, she picks up a candle and a silken scarf. Past the Spectral Scorpion and the Lion's Head and the Broken Path, Julie meets Mellisandre again, in the Dungeon Kitchen this time. Mellie is thrilled to see that Julie is carrying her favour (the scarf) and passes on a few useful hints (in the form of a very badly-rhyming poem) including the first step (*the hop*) and a spell called FLARE.

Julie then has to negotiate a series of rocky ledges, where she is pursued by Olaf. The Viking guard eventually catches up with the dungeoneer and demands some "lootings" before he lets her pass. Julie is able to bribe Olaf with the candle; he is so pleased with it that he tells the team the second step - *the handshake*. When Julie reaches the wellway room, someone has turned the lights out. However, the FLARE spell soon puts that straight, and Julie is directed into the well, relentlessly pursued by a skull ghost.

Level Two: Julie lands on the Mills of Doom, for the mechanical puzzle's first of two appearances in series 3. The advisors direct her safely out, into a room with five doors. Hordriss is sitting at a table, and he gives the team a riddle to help them decide which door to take, as well as the third step - *the stretch*. Once the advisors have finally worked out which door to use (the furthest one to the left) they direct Julie out, into the level two clue room, where she has to pick up some food whilst being pursued by another skull ghost.

Unusually, Julie enters through the door on the left and exits up the stairs, which is the only time this ever happens. Merlin's throne room follows, where the team's fate is sealed. Julie summons the three steps and calls Merlin to his throne, and the usual two riddles follow. The advisors almost stumble on the first answer, but get it right after quite some time. However, they then blow it by answering the second riddle very quickly, with no discussion and, crucially, the wrong answer.

Merlin refuses to give the team any magic, but he still wishes them luck, even though he knows (just like the rest of us) that they're doomed! The Cavern Range follows, where Julie has to rescue Velda from some goblin-tied bonds. Velda is grateful for Julie's help, and gives her a green gem as a token of her gratitude. Julie then enters the Great Corridor of the Catacombs, which is crawling with goblins!

In a memorable death scene, Julie approaches the nearest right-hand door and almost walks straight into a goblin as it emerges from the exit! Surrounded by goblins, and without Merlin's magic to save her, Julie is doomed: *"I think we should draw a veil over this scene, team. It's enough for you to know that Julie is no longer with us."* - **Treguard**.

Summary: An intelligent, engaging team, who got a lot further than most in the notoriously tough series 3. Victory was denied them after one small slip-up, which was a shame.

REMEMBER HER?

Series 7. Level 1/2/3.

ROMAHNA

I have to warn you, readers - I do not like this character at all, so if you do, you may wish to skip ahead to the next section of the fanzine. Romahna was a dragon wardress, who had apparently been assigned to the Dungeon to protect Smirkenorff from the vengeful Lord Fear and his dragon-slaying Brollachan, intent on getting his own back for the red dragon incident at the end of the previous series. She wore a Phantom of the Opera type mask, presumably signifying some kind of scarring from being burned by a dragon, and carried a crossbow that fired fireballs.

Jacquelin Joyce was the actress responsible for bringing Romahna to life, but I don't think she did a very good job of it. I found her unconvincing and unnecessarily unpleasant, and she can clearly be heard to stumble over her lines three or four times during the series.

In practical terms, pretty much all Romahna did was shout at and threaten dungeoneers, and tell them whether or not they were allowed to ride on Smirkenorff. This was very presumptive of her, as Smirkenorff had a mind of his own, and didn't really need her help to avoid Lord Fear's evil plans for revenge at all, as the Brollachan didn't get anywhere near him in the end!

A typical meeting with Romahna would involve a lot of shouting and threatening from the wardress, a bit of smooth-talking from the dungeoneer, and finally a bit of help if the team was lucky. Even after being convinced of the dungeoneers' allegiance to the Powers that Be, Romahna was still overly hostile towards them most of the time. Even if the dungeoneer had done her a huge favour (like saving her from Sylvester Hands in Nicola's case, or releasing her from the pillory in Barry's) Romahna never allowed her frosty mood to thaw very much.

Romahna was involved in a more in-depth storyline during winning dungeoneer Julie's level one, when she was captured by Raptor (on Lord Fear's orders) in the hopes that she could be forced to betray Smirkenorff. Julie saved her, of course, and received a free flight to level two in exchange, but Romahna's thanks were still scant and insincere, in my opinion.

So, there we have it - a complete slating! I'm sorry if you feel differently, but I have nothing positive to say about Romahna, or Jacquelin Joyce's portrayal of her. This is, perhaps, slightly strange, as I find Joyce's portrayal of her other character (Marta) convincing and enjoyable, as you'll find out in detail in an upcoming installment of this section.

Fear Factor: 6 Armed and dangerous!

Killer Instinct: 1 All mouth, but plenty of it.

Humour Rating: 2 You definitely wouldn't want to be stuck in a lift with her!

Oscar Standard: 4 Many telling mistakes and no depth whatsoever.

THE ADVENTURER'S ADVENTURE

By Gary Day

Level 3

With a thud, the Adventurer lands in level three. A hobgoblin is approaching him. With no means of escape and with no objects or spells to use, he realises that he will have to rely on his sword once more. He once again takes a defensive stance and awaits the initial charge of the hobgoblin. The hobgoblin runs towards the Adventurer and swings his axe towards him. The Adventurer has to take evasive action, and manages to step back and avoid the axe. Then the hobgoblin tries to hack at the Adventurer once more, but the Adventurer is able to deflect with his shield and follow up with a quick stab to the chest. The hobgoblin has no chance of avoiding the stab, and so he falls to the ground, there to remain for eternity. The Adventurer is now able to get his bearings. He sees an exit ahead and decides to take the path offered to him. He follows the corridor for some time, and finally encounters a portal that he is able to walk through. This portal leads him to a room, with a table that contains a bunch of grapes, a length of rope, a key and a green gem. He starts to eat the grapes as he ponders which items to take. He picks up the rope and sees underneath it a magical looking-glass.

Treguard:

Well done, Adventurer, and welcome to level three. I will be unable to speak to you much in this level, but what I can say is that you have found yourself a spyglass, which you can use to spy on your enemy. Look into it, but do not linger too long or you will be spotted by Mogdred. Valuable information could be obtained, but the risk is yours to take.

The Adventurer decides that a quick look cannot do too much harm, and holds up the spyglass. At first it is clear, then suddenly, without warning, the spyglass begins to fizzle into an image, until he can see and hear Mogdred through the glass.

Mogdred:

Well, little elf, I can see you are wondering why Mogdred would have captured you. I mean, what use can an elf be in a deep dungeon? Well, little elf, I shall tell you. It is because an elf can live for thousands of years, and I plan to extract from you the secret as to why elves live for so long. Once I have discovered this secret, I can rule for eternity.

Pickle:

Why are you so monstrous?

Mogdred:

Look upon Mogdred, Pickle, look upon Mogdred and quail! I shall make sure that you never leave here.

Pickle:

I'm sure that someone will rescue me, Mogdred; I am not afraid.

Mogdred:

Oh really, Pickle? Well, I hope you enjoy your cell, because you will be there for a long time. No key can open it - only by magic can it be opened. Wait, I sense a mortal spying on me!

The Adventurer decides to put the spyglass down. He now realises that the key must be the duff object, and so takes the rope and the green gem. He decides that he should not wait around any longer and makes a move through the right-hand portal. The Adventurer now enters a room with a wizard sitting in his chair. The Adventurer walks up to the wizard to ascertain whether he is friend or foe.

Hordriss:

Good day to you, sir. I am Hordriss the Confuser, and I am neither friend nor foe. I aim for neutrality in this realm, and when one side looks likely to cause disorder I aim to help the other side to keep it in balance. The question is, which side are you on?

Adventurer:

I am here to rescue an elf named Pickle, who is being held captive by Mogdred. He has been locked in a cage; only magic can open it.

Hordriss:

Ah, so it would seem that Mogdred has captured himself an elf. But of what concern should this be to me?

Adventurer:

He aims to extract the secrets of the elf so that he can become immortal!

Hordriss:

Really? Well, if Mogdred were immortal then that would inevitably unbalance things. Very well, I will aid you, but only if you are properly equipped may you succeed against this foe. There are three spells that you will need in order to rescue the elf - one to defend yourself from Mogdred, one to attack Mogdred, and one to rescue the elf. I cannot provide you with these spells, as my part in this tale must be minimal. However, there is another wizard that you will meet, one you have met before. He can provide you with two of the spells, but there is one that even he cannot provide. The final spell will be scattered around the level, and you must search for it, for without it all your efforts will be in vain! All I can assist you with is to enchant your rope, so that it will perform the task it has been left for. Spellcasting: H-O-O-K!

As Hordriss finishes casting the spell, a grappling hook appears at the end of the rope.

Hordriss:

Now, be gone, before Mogdred senses your presence through me.

Adventurer:

Thank you, Hordriss.

The Adventurer takes his leave through the right-hand exit. The Adventurer is now faced with a causeway. He looks at the causeway and sees an array of quite random numbers. He is not at all aware of how to cross the causeway. It is then that Mogdred appears.

Mogdred:

I shall give you one more chance to pledge yourself to me, Adventurer. If you do so, I shall give you the combination to cross this causeway, for there is no other way you will get it right. If you choose not to, you shall have to stay here forever or die on the causeway!

The Adventurer does not wish to give in to Mogdred, but he cannot see another way across. He thinks, however, that a knight should stand his ground against the most difficult of situations, and so decides that he will just have to find another way across.

Adventurer:

I again choose to reject your offer, Mogdred!

Mogdred:

Really? Well, then you shall stay here forever!

Mogdred disappears and leaves the Adventurer with an impossible causeway. The Adventurer thinks about just running across the causeway as quickly as possible and hoping the blocks do not fall that quickly, but he then thinks that Mogdred would have thought of that. He looks around and sees a metal hook in the middle of the ceiling.

The Adventurer lines himself up and begins to gain momentum, swinging the rope around his head. When he feels the timing is right, he launches the rope towards the hook and it grabs on. Once he is happy that the rope is secure, he swings across the entire causeway! He lands on the other side and tries to loosen the rope. He manages to loosen the rope, and it falls and hits the middle of the causeway. The whole causeway falls, and the Adventurer tries to reel in the rope as quickly as possible. With success, he retains the rope, feeling that it may prove useful to him once more. Before he leaves the room, a bolt of lightning appears and Merlin stands in front of him.

Merlin:

Very good, Adventurer! I was not expecting you to stand your ground against Mogdred in such a difficult situation. Well, for such valour you have shown that you are indeed determined to complete your quest. I can offer you two spells. The first is a defensive spell, and is called Shade. The second is an offensive spell, and is called Anvil. These will aid you against Mogdred, but I do not know how to rescue the elf. For that you will need to find a solution. Now, I must be gone. Spellcasting: J-U-M-P

Merlin disappears once more. The Adventurer leaves the room through the portal in front of him.

In the next room, he is confronted by a skeleton. He grasps his sword and takes a defensive stance, waiting for the skeleton to approach. The skeleton takes the invitation and moves in on the Adventurer. The skeleton manages to get his scythe

into his two hands and goes for a massive swing at the Adventurer. The Adventurer steps back to avoid the swing. The skeleton tries to swing again to force the Adventurer back towards the wall, but he is fully aware of his position and side-steps around to get himself away from the wall. The skeleton keeps persisting and swings once more. This time the Adventurer dodges the swing and manages to swing his sword at the skeleton. The skeleton takes the hit and smiles, as it has not done any damage to him. The Adventurer then realises that he will need a blunt weapon like a club, hammer or mace to defeat the skeleton. He tries to look around the room to see if there is a weapon he can use. As he dodges a further swing from the skeleton, he catches sight of a large hammer that could prove effective. The Adventurer starts to move towards the hammer, whilst avoiding further blows from the skeleton. The Adventurer eventually manages to get himself in position to collect the large hammer. He drops his sword and snatches the hammer, before having to avoid another swing of the scythe. The Adventurer then gathers himself and prepares to find a moment to attack the skeleton. It presents itself moments later when the skeleton goes for an almighty swing towards the Adventurer and, as the Adventurer rolls under the swing, the scythe gets stuck into the wall. This is when the Adventurer charges at the skeleton and swings the large hammer at the creature's head. He manages to crush the skeleton's head and end its existence.

After a short rest, the Adventurer leaves the large hammer and collects his favoured sword. He then sees an exit to the left, and begins to walk towards it.

The Adventurer's path is short now, but increasingly dangerous. Will he manage to free Pickle and earn his golden spurs? Come back next time for the final part of *The Adventurer's Adventure*.

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

Leeds Castle, Maidstone, Kent

Leeds Castle. Vital Statistics:

Location: Leeds, near Maidstone, Kent.

Century of Origin: 13th.

Also Known As: The Tower of Time.

Series featured in: 4.

These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, in September 2006. They were scanned by Rosey Collins in October 2006.

Here is the main entrance to the grounds of Leeds Castle. When I first encountered this gatehouse, I was tempted to "do the chant" as Dickon's advisors would say. That's right, readers - this is the chamber of Dooris, and also the entry-point for the conveyer belt in level one for dungeoneer Jeremy.



Below is the level two chamber where Dickon and Vicky both encountered Gundrada. Unfortunately, it is impossible for visitors to get right down into it, so you'll have to make do with this aerial shot:



Here is the exit from the chamber above. As you can see, it's not really possible to walk out of the room quite so easily as the eye shield sequence would have us believe:



Next Issue: Haddon Hall, Derbyshire.

TOP TEN AD-LIBS

Part of the challenge of being an actor on *Knightmare* was that a lot of the material was not scripted, but made up on the spot. Whenever a Dungeon-dwelling character was talking to a dungeoneer, they would, of course, have had certain things they were supposed to say and do, but no one knew just how the conversation was going to take shape. As such, the actors had the opportunity to show off their theatrical skills by coming up with memorable pieces of ad-lib in response to what the dungeoneer said or did. Here are my ten favourite bits of ad-lib from *Knightmare*. I have awarded the ranking in the list to the actor who came up with the brilliant on-the-spot material, but, as you will see, I have not limited the number of times any one actor can appear in the list.

10. CLIFFORD NORGATE as Hordriss.

Ad-lib: "If you get up, I may give you some."

Episode: Series 5, episode 2.

Dungeoneer: Catherine.

After completing a pact that involved the retrieval of a sphinx bone, Hordriss asked Catherine to stand up, which he himself then did. Catherine, however, remained seated, and asked him (following the instructions of her advisors) if he had any more information for her. Hordriss's response was suitably haughty, and made it clear to the team that they needed to listen very carefully when characters were speaking.

9. TOM KAROL as Mrs Grimwold.

Ad-lib: "If there's more of this... on your way back, don't forget, bring it to me!"

Episode: Series 3, episode 6.

Dungeoneer: James.

Mrs Grimwold had accepted a bar of gold from James in return for not setting Festus on him. She had already come out with the line: "*If there's more of this where this came from, old Festus will just have to chew on rocks, won't he?*" Being only human, Tom Karol obviously forgot that he had already said this line, and started to say it again, but changed it into something else at the last moment. It was a nice save.

8. JOHN WOODNUTT as Merlin.

Ad-lib: "Come over here, dungeoneer. It's a bit more magical over here."

Episode: Series 2, episode 4.

Dungeoneer: Mark.

When Merlin entered his level two chamber for an appearance in winning dungeoneer Mark's quest, he noticed that the dungeoneer was standing in the way of the camera that did a close-up on his chair. There are many examples throughout Knightmare's run of characters moving dungeoneers in and out of camera shots (Julie I and Olaf; Richard II and Sylvester Hands) but John Woodnutt came up with a great reason for getting Mark to move. It makes complete sense that one part of Merlin's mysterious study might be more magical than another, plus it meant that Merlin could have his close-up!

7. SAMANTHA PERKINS as Gundrada.

Ad-lib: "Yes, well I'm a big strong maiden with huge muscles!"

Episode: Series 4, episode 4.

Dungeoneer: Alistair.

Gundrada's response to Alistair's remark that maidens shouldn't fight with swords was a very good bit of ad-lib, and really summed up Gundrada's whole character rather nicely.

6. PAUL VALENTINE as Motley.

Ad-lib: "London? Oh well, we all got problems, ain't we?"

Episode: Series 4, episode 14.

Dungeoneer: Jeremy.

In the Crazyed Heifer, Motley came up with this rather random line when he found out where Jeremy lived (after having had to ask him twice) and, luckily, it didn't offend the team too badly. It's very much a throwaway line, but it always makes me laugh.

5. MARK KNIGHT as Ah Wok.

Ad-lib: "A lady's name? Well, Jane, that's a lady's name."

Episode: Series 6, episode 9.

Dungeoneer: Ben II.

After buying a true-sight potion from Ah Wok in Wolfenden, Ben asked the tradesman if he had anything else for him. Ah Wok asked what sort of thing Ben might need, and then Ben asked his advisors what the lady's name was, in reference to Sidriss, whom he had to help to break a spell that made her love Sylvester Hands. Rather than ignore this question (as the actors usually did when the dungeoneer asked their advisors something) Mark Knight picked up on it as the thing Ben might need, and gave him a lady's name, just like he'd asked for!

4. MARY MILLER as Mildread.

Ad-lib: "Because I'm a poor old elderly witch-woman that's hungry, that's what!"

Episode: Series 2, episode 8.

Dungeoneer: Neil.

Mildread, like Lillith, usually required an object before she would help a dungeoneer, and Neil had the cheek to ask her why she wanted something from him! Mary Miller came up with an excellent response to this question, which could only have been improved slightly by saying *why* instead of *what* at the end.

3. MARK KNIGHT as Rothberry.

Ad-lib: "These... these are bats' droppings. What you do you, you see Naila, is you put these under your pillow, and then in the morning you have no trouble getting up."

Episode: Series 7, episode 7.

Dungeoneer: Naila.

This was another occasion where actor Mark Knight (in his guise as a stallholder) had been asked if he had anything else to help the dungeoneer and, rather than just saying no (which would have been the most accurate response), he decided to bring his acting skills to the fore and come out with an amusing piece of ad-lib. This line is quite funny in its own right, but the fact that Rothberry had just started eating the bats' droppings made it hilarious, as it seemed he'd only realised what the small brown things were after he'd put them in his mouth! Mark Knight's improvisation skills were obviously first-rate, and it's a shame that he hardly ever got to use them whilst playing his main character, Lord Fear, 99.9% of whose material was scripted for spyglass sequences.

2. MICHAEL CULE as Brother Mace.

Ad-lib: "Well, it could be a highly magical and symbolic horn of great power. On the other hand, it could just be a tatty old drinking horn for all I know."

Episode: Series 5, episode 8.

Dungeoneer: Ben I.

Michael Cule is another fine actor; he almost made it onto this list more than once, but not quite. Brother Mace always interacted very well with the dungeoneers he met, and never was this more obvious than in his scene with winning dungeoneer Ben. The line above was in response to being asked about the horn that Ben was carrying, which made me and my

family laugh out loud back in 1991, but the whole scene was excellent, including the famous part where Ben asks Mace to prove his identity, a situation that was handled with skill and good humour by Michael Cule.

1. AUDREY JENKINSON as *Gretel*.

Ad-lib: "But Julian, you should be able to hear from my voice that I'm terribly pretty, now DO YOU think I'm pretty?"

Episode: Series 2, episode 11.

Dungeoneer: Julian.

Much as I hate *Gretel* as a character, I had to put this in at number one, because it was the piece of ad-lib that inspired me to write this article in the first place! When *Gretel* asked Julian if he thought she was pretty, no one was expecting him to reply (quite truthfully) that he didn't know because he couldn't see her! Audrey Jenkinson came up with a brilliant response in order to coax the desired answer from the dungeoneer, stamping her foot petulantly and raising her voice in just the right place. Well done, Audrey - despite appearing in only six episodes and playing an unnecessarily stupid character, you've earned your place in the Nightmare Hall of Fame!

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

Scroll Clues I

The following sentences are all scroll clues from series 5-8 of Nightmare, and they all come from clue rooms. Can you remember which one or two objects they are telling the team to take in each case? Name the series, episode, dungeoneer and level as well if you can.

1.) Sea journeys are healthy - don't forget the fair.

2.) Green for a girl; black for a boy.

3.) Take one step forward, two steps right.

4.) I speak when spoken to.

5.) Travel light - fall slowly.

6.) Give him a great big hand!

7.) Some weapons belong to friends.

8.) One is a weapon; one is payment.

9.) Sometimes one has to put one's foot down.

10.) She who would be queen is your only hope.

ALAN BOYD IMPROVIEW

With Robin Barlow

ROBIN: Right, for starters, give a brief summary of yourself to the readership.

ALAN: How do you mean? Like the fact that I'm handsome and smart, or...?

Just of you and your Knightmare involvement to date. We'll put the handsome, rich, smart stuff in later.

Okay, well I was the team captain of our little winning group. The legends claim that I was the first, or one of the first, visitors to Nicholas's Knightmare site (before it was called www.knightmare.com) when it started up. In the early days of the community, I think I ran the chat server. I ran one of the bots and was there most weeks. I also helped with (or at least discussed) very early plans for the RPG with Adam Battersby... Then I vanished for a while. Came back every so often for a week or two (usually when someone alerted me to my team being slagged off, to defend it) and then vanished again. And that's about it. I've started running the KMV project, which has been running in silent mode for about six months now and has finally come into the open.

Nice one. What attracted you to Knightmare when you were back in the land of bratdom?

I can't remember ever NOT watching Knightmare. Certainly I remember seeing it at age six, probably even before then. I used to play a lot of Dungeons and Dragons with Alex and Dunstan (two other members of my team) and we all used to watch Knightmare, so I guess the fantasy element was just something that appealed to us.

Do you have a favourite actress (or indeed actor) that you drooled over, professionally or otherwise?

I loved Mark Knight. I always saw Lord Fear as someone who managed to pull off scary and funny at the same time. Not so funny that it ruins the scary, but somehow still amusing. I'm sure he reminds me of some kind of bad guy... Oh, these days he reminds me of Spike from Angel/Buffy. I only met the actor briefly, but he really seemed to be perfect for the role. Something about him was just so... fun.

Do you wish you'd quested yourself, or are you not a fancier of helmets?

Whenever someone hears that I was on Nightmare, the question I always get asked is, *were you the one in the helmet?* So, partly... I mean, Dunstan had the advantage that when he got to watch us on TV, all the rooms and encounters were new to him and he got to experience the fun a second time. He also got to do most of what we did, but slightly more, as he was in a different area. But then being a team captain would have been harder, I think, so it's a tough decision. Dunstan had the advantage of being small, which is why I picked him for the dungeoneer rather than Alex or Oliver. But whether I would have taken it myself, I don't really know. It's so hard to say.

So literally a difficult toss between having it hard or having a big, shiny

helmet on your head. Is there anything you'd have changed about your quest?

Well, with regards to the dungeoneer, I think I made the right call. Dunstan was smaller (better) and as a team captain, I would have sucked being the dungeoneer. As for changing things, not really. I mean, there's the whole issue of the Short Cut, of course, but I can't really say I'd change that under the circumstances.

Fair enough, couldn't have a dungeoneer being seen to suck on TV, now could we? Is there anything you'd like people to hear with regards to the cut of shorts?

I would quite like to clear up the issue of shortcuts. I'm not sure if you know how the system for taking part worked. Basically, we were called as a team A died and a team B went in. When team B died, we went in and another team C was called. The idea was that the next team was always ready (or almost always ready). We arrived on a Friday, and the team before us was still playing. We were told that there almost certainly wasn't enough time to do a full Dungeon run, but if we took the Short Cut, we might have enough time. The team before us died when we were out to lunch, so we had to film two or three rooms and then we went home for the weekend. We had to decide whether to take the Short Cut or not.

In the words of Captain Bertorelli, *what a decision-a to make-a!*

Yes, it was pretty hard. We decided it was better to go for the Short Cut, which would at least give us a chance. Failing that, if we died early, the next team would have a greater chance of completing the Dungeon. Before we chose, the floor manager (I forget his name) warned us that just because we skipped level two, it did not mean it was going to be

easier - they would fill the gap by taking the harder half of level two and the harder half of level three (I understand the levels overlap in difficulty a bit) and we'd simply have harder rooms.

Well, at least it was better than those boys from series 4 who got so very near but had victory snatched away in favour of Christmas.

Yeah, I mean, I'm not saying we were a great group. We certainly learned whilst playing - it's evident how much we improve in just a few rooms. But in our defence, we missed a level two to train on - which really is the tradeoff, isn't it? It was really a case of *learn quick or die*. So I don't regret the decision - I don't think we would have had time to complete the Dungeon otherwise. As for not deserving it, we completed the final rooms and did the logic puzzles faster than anyone else, not to mention having to do the Corridor of Blades, which is a big killer in itself. And was it a big deal for us? Yes, ideally we would have been one of the first teams to be called and we would have done it the regular way. But you can see our indecisiveness by the way that we take both items (in the clue room) needed to get to levels two or three, so that we could make up our minds later.

Okay, I think we can fast-forward a century now (to the 21st) and you can tell us all about your new project.

The new project is called KMV.

Knaughty Maids Videos?

Not entirely... Kinky Maiden Voyage, perhaps.

Hurrah for kinky maiden voyages!

Indeed. So, I don't think anything like KMV has been done before. I suppose it's rather like an internet TV gameshow. Teams volunteer and they get put up against our Dungeon. We "film" their attempt, and make them available as online movies.

How long would a full quest last?

Well, assuming they make it all the way, I'd estimate about forty-five minutes to an hour. But we'll possibly package them as "TV shows" to ease up on the editing, and because groups that fail may only last a few minutes. It would suck if an episode only lasted six minutes, not to mention give away what was going to happen.

You need the cliffhangers for sure.

Yes, that was the worst part of Nightmare, wasn't it? Seeing the end of the episode and cursing that you had to wait another week for your next fix!

Absolutely! You wished they'd at least complete that room/puzzle.

I think I just always wished it would last another hour.

This was especially true on the rare occasions that they got to level three.

Yes, I still remember the excitement I used to feel when they travelled down in the minecart. There was something about that sequence that I used to like. I think that was my favourite bit of Nightmare, actually.

It made the Dungeon seem enormous to me and so much more dangerous, and thus thrilling.

Yes, and also the rarity of it made it appealing too. In comparison, the entries to level three in later series always seemed so... Well, actually, there weren't really any, were there? You just tended to complete a puzzle and there you were.

Yes, the humour got greater but the difficulty went down as a result.

Yes, I think that's true. The introduction of Lord Fear did seem to make things less tense. But I think it was just a change to the structure of the entire Dungeon rather than the man himself. I mean, you hardly saw him at all.

Indeed. No longer did we have such a dark, dismal place. It was a lot livelier and more accessible.

Yes, I missed the dark, dismal bits. I wish they'd had that with Lord Fear.

Would be nice, but aside from his eyes staring (surely you can't do that to kids anymore) he wasn't quite so chilling.

It's hard to say, it's been so long since I saw him. The previous bad guys seemed so cardboard-cutout - *I am a bad guy and I am now going to kill you, look how evil I am* etc. It somehow seemed a bit cheesy. Lord Fear doesn't come across as cheesy evil to me. He still seems to be elegant and refined in an evil way - the bad guy who cleverly mocks his victims before killing them.

John Woodnutt's performance in his dual role as Merlin and Mogdred

was still excellent, though. What type of characters are planned to be in your new Dungeon - newly created, old favourites or a mix?

Well, it's important to note that we aren't Knightmare. It's inspired by Knightmare, and there are certainly some similarities, but I've tried to keep it distinct. We currently have only fleshed out our bad guy (girl).

Ooh, naughty girls!

We have some very specific ideas in mind with regards to Makari. Yes, she's been very bad.

Excellent, we need more of that sort.

Evil women are so much more interesting than evil men. Other characters will come down to who will be available for any filming we do, either on or offline.

I'd have liked an evil Stiletta segment, personally.

Yes, Maldame was really the only bad girl at the end, and she was far more selfish than evil.

Is there anything else you'd like to reward people who have read this far into the interview with?

KMV isn't reward enough? Okay, in our quest, Dunstan (smart arse that he is) had to tell a joke. When we filmed it, it went like this: *Dunstan: "Why did the dragon cross the road?" Motley: "I don't know." Dunstan: "To get his pension."* At this point, with the joke incomplete, Smirkenorff started laughing at the joke, so they had to re-record the audio right at the end with the joke being told properly. There you go, that's my amusing story.

Well, thank you indeed, we've both been smart and handsome and you readers have been fools for reading our witterings. If you'd like further talks of this type, let Jake know and he'll tell me to annoy Alan with another one.

Or just come to KM chat. Or better yet, get involved in KMV! Though perhaps I shouldn't be saying that...

THE BIG ISSUE

By Rosey Collins

Just when you thought there were no more comparisons to be made between characters, another Big Issue crawls out of the woodwork. I defy anyone to argue that Mildread and Mrs. Grimwold didn't fulfil a similar role. Both were ugly old witches with almost as ugly personalities, who would either send you to level two or send you stumbling into the jaws of death.

MILDREAD: The slightly evil old crone from series 2, played by Mary Miller.

Advantages: Mary Miller, in this role, had the most wonderful makeup job. She was a repulsive, jaundiced old hunchback who was years beyond the help of a dentist; I never would have guessed she was played by the same actress as Lillith. And who doesn't like a character with a cool power? Mildread had voice- and shape-shifting abilities, which she used to play practical jokes on dungeoneers - and these were particularly amusing when the advisors were too thick even to *try* and work out what was going on.

She was good for anyone who's fond of the classic fairytale witch, with her shrill cackle and her bubbling cauldron and, in her final appearance, a broomstick. The earlier series had a lot of characters that were as willing to help your quest as hinder it, depending on what the dungeoneer had to offer them - an element that sadly was lost in later series when everyone was either Powers that Be or Opposition - and Mildread was certainly one of those in-betweeny people.

Disadvantages: The way Mildread eats into Lillith's appearances isn't ideal, at least if you like Lillith. This Hansel and Gretel throwback was far less original than Mary Miller's other character, and never wanted anything as interesting as a Buddha or a bunch of flowers or an ice pack from the dungeoneer. Indeed, for those people *not* so fond of the classic fairytale witch, Mildread was something of a cliché. I happen to think that giving her a classic sweet old lady name but sticking "dread" on the end of it was a bit naff - but all in all, there's not much to complain about here.

Mrs. Grimwold: The slightly evil old crone from series 3, played by Tom Karol.

Disadvantages: It's customary to put the advantages first, but this time it just won't work. I'll mention the very long and unnecessary scene in which Mrs. Grimwold tries to sell a dungeoneer (Scott) a map he doesn't need, and then just wanders off when he refuses. What's *that* about? Nobody else tries to sell a red herring to a dungeoneer unless they also have something that the dungeoneer must try to wheedle out of them.

But that's just one piece of dumb writing, and not the character's fault. As far as I'm concerned, Mrs. Grimwold's only real disadvantage is that she was yet another

character-from-series-two-but-let's-make-it-different-by-saying-they're-somebody-else character (sorry, series 3 purists, but this is my opinion). However, this is followed by a big but. She *was* just Mildread by a different name, BUT...

Advantages: This lovely lady was, in my opinion, a better character than Mildread. A guy in a dress is usually fun. Very panto, but fun. Mrs. Grimwold was like the creepy old woman next door who makes you call her "Auntie": she was sweet and kind and helpful and addressed you as "dearie" for as long as you were on the right side of her, but she was also potentially dangerous.

"Anyone who can survive being married to an ogre has got to be considered dangerous." - Treguard.

Unlike Mildread, she didn't just have a bubbling cauldron she wanted to stick you in; instead she had a vicious, two-headed, Cerberus-like dog who was always hungry. This actually worked very well: often, the dungeoneer would present Mrs. Grimwold with "a bone for your dog Festus", in which case old Mrs. G. would let them pass with a useful bit of information (e.g. the second step). But if Festus was left hungry, he liked live meat just as much as bones - or probably more, if I'm honest. This is the only instance in which the dungeoneer her or himself can be used as a direct substitute for the desired object, which I happen to think is pretty cool.

Mrs. G. was a deeper, altogether fleshier character than Mildread, having not only a pet she loved but also a husband - I am sorry Mr. and Mrs. G. had only one scene together. There's something appealing about characters with family - they loved doing stuff with Hordriss and Sidriss, after all - and this family even has a dog. Aww. The Grimwolds were certainly enduring; after their disappearance from the Dungeon, Lord

Fear makes mention of "the entire Grimwold family", one of whom - a dense, lumbering ogre much like his father - we see working as Julius Scaramonger's apprentice in series 6. Mrs. Grimwold and her family were at once threatening and endearing - who could ask for anything more?

DUNGEONEER DWELLINGS

Series 3



POETRY CORNER

Today we remind ourselves of the closing stages of series 3, where Chris and his Bristol boys are off on a whirlwind Dungeon adventure.

Time was short for Chris and men
To dungeoneer in Treguard's den.
Chris and Hordriss made a pact
To keep the warlock's pride intact.
The object was an hourglass,
Brangwen's test was next to pass.
Hidden by a bricked-off screen,
Then through the valley, cold and green,
Goblins fled from Hordriss' sword,
SPEED was Chris's just reward.
In dwarven tunnel, ogre's roar
Required a burst of speed for sure!
Beside the wellway, Mrs G
Received a bone as Chris's fee.
Festus then had much to munch,
But what exactly *was* his lunch?
Down the wellway, in a spin,
Mills of Doom caused much chagrin.
Merlin's magic promised FLIGHT,
Then magic horn-blasts caused a fright!
Time was up, the quest was done,
Another year until more fun!

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Insulting Quotes:

- 1.) Gundrada is insulting Mellisandre, in episode 410, with Vicky.
- 2.) Sylvester Hands/Ridolfo, episode 605, Alan.
- 3.) Cedric/Gumboil, episode 204, Mark.
- 4.) Skarkill/Sir Hugh, episode 511, Alex I.
- 5.) Mogdred/McGrew, episode 308, Ross.
- 6.) Lord Fear/Lissard, episode 705, Alex II.
- 7.) Elita/Skarkill, episode 613, Sofia.
- 8.) Lord Fear/Hordriss, episode 607, January.
- 9.) Brother Mace/Merlin, episode 505, Sarah.
- 10.) Majida/Romahna, episode 701, Simon IV.
- 11.) Gwendoline/Sylvester Hands, episode 508, Ben I.
- 12.) Lord Fear/Treguard, episode 516, Kelly II.
- 13.) Casper/Gumboil, episode 215, Steven.
- 14.) Mildread/Gretel, episode 206, Tony.

Scroll Clues:

- 1.) Bar of gold. Ben II. Level 3. Episode 610.
- 2.) Green blade; pigeon droppings. Richard III. Level 1. Episode 801.
- 3.) Knight from a chess set. Sarah. Level 2. Episode 505.
- 4.) Book of magic spells, with bookworm included. Naila. Level 2. 708.
- 5.) Feather of Falling. Nathan. Level 2. Episode 805.
- 6.) Gauntlet. Alan. Level 2. Episode 606.
- 7.) Green arrow. Alex I. Level 1. Episode 510.
- 8.) Troll wine; green gem. Simon IV. Level 3. Episode 703.
- 9.) Boot. Barry. Level 2. Episode 713.
- 10.) "Power to Rule" jar. Oliver. Level 3. Episode 810.